The Dominance Fights

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The Dominance Fights

by TheMarvelousMinniPin

Summary

Will's life is falling apart, as per its usual habit. He has been selected as a prize Omega in the Alpha Dominance Fights. He's waiting for the worst to happen; he will be claimed by the victor, forcibly mated, bred, and kept away from any real life outside of the home.

Hannibal is rather unwilling to let that happen. He missed his chance to tell Will his true feelings, but he may be redeemed. There is only one way to get an Omega out of a Dominance Fight: Win.

Notes

This is the first fanfiction I have written in nearly five years, as well as both my first Hannibal fanfic and my first A/B/O fanfic. This isn't beta-read so if you see any mistakes, please feel free to point them out. This first bit is not a chapter, merely an explanation of my version of the Omegaverse because there is no solid canon to go off of. If you don't feel you need it, go ahead and go to the first chapter.

XOXO

Explaining the Omegaverse

There are three different designations, in addition to traditional genders: Alpha, Beta, and Omega.

Betas are basically normal humans, like us. Nothing really special about them. Betas enter relationships with other Betas, have Beta babies, and are generally kept out of A/O dynamics by societal expectations. Betas can only have children with other Betas.

Alphas are the "superior" species. They have heightened senses of smell, hearing, and sight. They are naturally dominant, assertive, and somewhat aggressive. Everything is a pissing contest with Alphas. Alphas can mate with other Alphas, but they have non-fertile Beta offspring. Alphas commonly mate with Omegas, as they will then have fertile Alpha or Omega offspring. Alphas are the highest in the social hierarchy, they have always had the most rights, they have the best (and most dangerous) jobs...think men. Alphas own their Omegas entirely, despite the advances in Omega rights. Thoroughbred Alphas are even more dominant, with farther heightened senses, and they are allowed more than one mate. Alphas can control their own Omegas through compulsion (enforcing their will through the bond) and other Omegas, to an extent, through hormonal release. It is said, but science will never confirm, that Alphas suffer without their Omega counterparts; they are more aggressive, but less powerful, and they have shorter lives.

If Alphas rule the world, Omegas rule the home. They have heightened senses of smell, taste, and feeling. They are generally submissive, pliant, and somewhat anxious. Omegas are emotional and their emotions can frequently get the better of them. Omegas can only mate with Alphas. They are seen as best kept at home, in nurturing positions. They are caregivers and they must strive to please their Alpha. Pleasing their Alpha is a nearly euphoric event, while displeasing them is physically painful. That makes it very unusual for an Omega to defy an Alpha. Omegas also suffer, both physically and mentally, without an Alpha as Alphas are their protection and emotional groundings. Bonded Omegas are somewhat more like Betas -they no longer have to obey any Alpha but their own, unless the other Alpha is much more powerful than their mate. Bonded Omegas will sometimes, with their Alpha's consent, take jobs as school teachers or daycare workers, or anything else that fits into their nurturing nature. Of course their primary job is always to raise as many children as their Alpha wants. Female Omegas can get pregnant basically whenever; male Omegas can only get pregnant in Heat.

A bond between and Alpha and Omega is a sacred thing. Attempting to interfere with a bonded pair can end you in prison, assuming the Alpha doesn't just kill you. Bonds can only be forged in Heat. A proper bond happens when a pair willingly drinks each other's blood and the hormone-filled...well essentially goo from a gland in the neck while mating. Alphas can technically force a bond under duress, as an Omega will feel compelled to bite during Heat, but an Omega can prevent a bond by refusing the answering bite. Unless they both drink, the bond will not be forged. It's usually then consummated with a knot, as the mating bite is rather orgasmic.

I'm going to leave it at that. Everything else can easily be learned within the context of the story itself. Honestly even this could have been, and most of it will be reiterated, but there are so many versions of the Omegaverse that I wanted to clarify all of this. I sometimes get confused while I'm reading Omegaverse stories because things are so different between authors.

XOXO

Chapter One

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You seem distracted, Will,” Hannibal led lightly. “More so than usual.”

“That’s saying a lot,” Will ground out as he continued his traditional circling the overstated office where he and Hannibal met for “conversations” and definitely not therapy.
“Is there something wrong?”

“Yes.”

“Would you care to discuss it?” Hannibal queried, allowing a slight air of exasperation to color his words. He had learned over time that he didn’t need to hide from Will as completely as he did from other people –ironic, if he considered all things equally. He should have had his battlements guarded more against Will than anyone else; instead he practically left the side door open for the empath.

“Not really. You can’t help me.” Will was shaking his head, almost as if that vigorous motion could hide how much the rest of him was shaking.

“Are you certain I can’t help? I can try, and I tend to be successful in a wide variety of endeavors.” Hannibal just followed Will with his eyes, comfortably leaned back in his chair – in a way that was much too dignified to be considered slouching- and took a sip of his wine. He was glad Will seemed to enjoy the ritual that Bedelia had inspired.

“Have you ever been successful in the fights?” Will asked in a way that implied he didn’t think he would get an answer.

“Once, when I was young and rather angry.”

Will stopped his circling to face his not-therapist with wide eyes that didn’t quite make contact. “Are we talking about the same fights? I mean the Dominance Fights.”

“Yes, I won one. I won the only one I ever entered. Why have you taken a sudden interest in Dominance Fights? I do believe you are ineligible.” Hannibal took another sip and waited for Will to reveal what he already knew, and what this conversation was beginning to make him suspect.

“Of course I’m ineligible; only Alphas can fight and we both know that I’m no Alpha,” The bitterness in that statement was incredible.

“Betas have nothing to do with them at all, so why are they making you uneasy?” He prodded just a little more, happy to force Will to say it.

“I’m not a Beta.”

The admission seemed to linger in the room. Hannibal paused in the middle of raising his glass to his lips, then reversed his movement and set it down. He let shock color his tone. “Is Jack aware that an Omega is working for him?”

“He’s just about the only one. Even Beverly, Price, and Zeller think I’m a Beta. Alana doesn’t know either, but then she’s a Beta and can’t smell anything. You, of course, already knew though.” Will inclined his head thoughtfully towards the doctor and allowed a slight smile to grace his lips, amused that he had seen through the doctor’s ruse. He climbed down the ladder and took his usual seat opposite Hannibal, sipping his wine agitatedly.

“I thought it best to pretend otherwise, as to not make you uncomfortable, but I do have a particularly strong sense of smell-“

“Even for an Alpha,” Will interrupted.

Hannibal allowed the interruption without so much as a twitch of his eyebrows. “Do you know why, Will?”

“I have my suspicions. And now that I know you won your very first Dominance Fight, my suspicion is even stronger. You’re a Thoroughbred.”

Hannibal inclined his head. “Indeed I am. While hormone blockers and that rather offensive aftershave can hide you from other Omegas and weaker Alphas, you never would have been able to hide it from me. As I said, I didn’t want to interrupt your disguise and make you uncomfortable. If you wish to masquerade as a Beta, that is your business. However, as a doctor, I am somewhat concerned about the long-term effects of taking those hormone blockers. Are you aware of what they can do to you?”

“Perfectly. I actually had a really good doctor in Louisiana and she explained things in quite graphic detail. She wasn’t trying to scare me either; she just wanted me to know the risks.” Will smiled ruefully and began listing them off. “Headaches, nausea, upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, blurry vision, dizziness, fainting, hot flashes, sensitivity to cold, seizures, little to no sexual interest, potentially decreased fertility, possible infertility. That’s kind of the point though.”

Hannibal added “Tumors, uterine cancer, fragile blood vessels, weakening aortic structure, skin lesions, brain swelling, encephalitis, brain tumors, cysts in various locations, and muscular weakness. I am amazed you can still stand upright, Will. You must have been taking them for a while.”

“Almost fifteen years,” Will confirmed. “And joy-oh-joy I’m about to have to stop.” Hannibal waited for the younger man to continue. “My registration number got selected. I’m being dragged in for the fights.”

Hannibal felt his blood run cold. As if Dominance Fights weren’t barbaric enough, pitting Alphas against each other in a show of strength that often, as Hannibal’s own did, ended in death, the most uncivilized part was the prize: an Omega. Hannibal had magnanimously set his own prize-won Omega free without mating her and now she owned a successful restaurant in D.C., where Hannibal always had a table and an excellent bottle of vintage

waiting. Such a thing was almost unheard of, but Hannibal hadn't wanted some needy Omega making his life a living hell and a litter of pups destroying his life.

America was one of the few countries left in the civilized world that still had non-voluntary Omega selections. They took the volunteers first, assuming they were desirable enough, and then went on to selecting Omegas by their registration numbers if there weren't enough volunteers. All Omegas, by law, had to be registered with the Omega Governance Board –"For their own protection and security!"- and any Omega without a registered mate could be selected for any number of unpleasant things, including being a prize in the Fights.

Hannibal must have been quiet for a moment too long, because Will cleared his throat. "Sooo…." He drew out the word. "Can you help me with that, Dr. Lecter?"

"I can try but no, I don't imagine I can. Perhaps with Jack we can find some way to convince the Omega Governance Board that you are too valuable an asset to be gambled but…."

"But what, Dr. Lecter?"

"But it is likely that they will see what you do as a disgrace and the fact that Jack lied to his superiors about your designation will not work on your favor. They will more likely than not say that this is obviously what is best for you; that the stress of your job and prolonged use of hormone blockers is causing you to be unstable. The whole reason Jack sent you to me was so that the higher ups at the FBI couldn't get their hands on any of my notes, since you aren't an official patient, but your file within the bureau contains a great deal that they could use against you."

The clock chimed nine o'clock and Will set his glass of wine down with a miserable sigh. He stood up slowly and looked hard at Hannibal for a few long moments. There seemed to be something he wanted to say, but Hannibal knew better than to push him. Finally he sighed again, and shook his head. In a small voice he said "I leave the day after tomorrow. This may be the last time I ever see you. So…so thank you. Thank you so much, for everything." Will was shaking again, and Hannibal rose from his seat to put one hand on each of his shoulders, squeezing reassuringly and steadying the other man.

"This will not be our last meeting, Will," Hannibal vowed without knowing why. He only knew that he was certain, and he would make sure that he was telling Will the truth. "I am glad if I have been able to help you, even a little. I know you have a heavy burden to bear. I only wish I could have shouldered it for you." Will was looking up at him in the most deliciously confused, vulnerable way and Hannibal couldn't seem to stop the words from falling off of his usually so well guarded tongue. He bit the wily organ back before he could say anything further and Will managed to fake a smile that came off more like a grimace.

"Thank you for being my friend," Now it was Will's turn to let unintended words bubble forth, but he forced himself to give Hannibal three solid seconds of eye contact to show his sincerity. "You know I don't have many," –any- "And you actually knew this whole time that I was an Omega and didn't treat me any differently. That means a lot. I think I might miss you." Okay Will, he thought sarcastically, time to go before you say anything too sappy.

Hannibal seemed to know what he meant. Will hesitated and then brought his hands up to Hannibal's shoulders, matching the other man's position. For a moment he let himself do something truly stupid and embarrassing: he pretended it was a hug. His entire life was being ripped out from under him and he was about to get sold to whichever Alpha proved himself the most brutal. It wasn't entirely ridiculous to want some small bit of comfort from the person who was probably his only friend, was it? He wasn't a terrible person for giving himself that illusion of a person caring for him, was he?

Will didn't notice that his hands were rapidly tightening on Hannibal's shoulders, or that his breathing had become erratic and Hannibal was staring at him with concern. The older man wondered if Will knew he was having a panic attack. Given the circumstances and Will's fragile state of mind, it wasn't unreasonable. He stepped forward half a step and allowed his own natural scent to soothe the Omega as only an Alpha could. Slowly Will calmed and loosened his grip incrementally, trying not to show how badly he was overwhelmed.

They were so close that Hannibal could finally smell what he had been catching hints of for weeks now. There was a fevered sweetness buried under those hormone blockers and aftershave, even under the natural scent of Will that he tried so hard to cover. As Will leaned held onto him, desperately trying to find solid ground, Hannibal confirmed what was keeping him adrift. Will had encephalitis. Hannibal had thought so for a while, hence why he deliberately mentioned it among the symptoms of long-term hormone blocker usage. Being right didn't make him feel as smug as it usually did.

As quickly as it came on, the episode faded and Will forced himself to step back. "Really, Hannibal," He used the man's name for once, trying again to show his sincerity. "Thank you. Good bye." He walked right out of the office then, knowing that if he hesitated any longer he wouldn't have the strength to face what was coming for him. Hannibal couldn't help him anyway. Not anymore.

When he heard the outer door to his office close, it took everything in Hannibal to pack up his briefcase and drive home and not do anything foolish. He did smash both of the wine glasses, but that was not as foolish as following Will. He couldn't stop the Omega Governance Board from coming for the empath; he had no registered Alpha, so he was fair game. That was what happened when a group of conservative old Alphas were left in charge of Omegas. Hannibal cursed in seven languages until his front door was locked behind him.

That Hannibal was unfeeling was the biggest misunderstanding people had of him. He was excellently well controlled; a man of grace and dignity well after those traits failed in others. He was not unfeeling. The art he created could never be made by an unfeeling man. If anything, Hannibal felt more deeply than most people, despite how he hid his emotions. No one knew that, except for whatever suspicions Will had about it.

Hannibal loved Will. He felt it down to the very core of his being. He had found his equal, his other, perhaps better, half in an emotionally damaged Omega who masqueraded as a Beta so that he could look into the minds of killers and save lives. Will saw the art in Hannibal's killings. Will understood. Understanding, true understanding, was the highest form of love. Hannibal understood Will too. He understood and he wanted, but he refrained from taking.

The only way to take Will would be to take him by force, and that was unacceptable for a number of reasons. First was that it would mean losing Will forever. He would have to destroy that delicious creature in order to take him without consent, and that was entirely against the point. Hannibal was not above murder, cannibalism, and dismemberment, but he did have morals. Forcing one's self on anyone –sexually, emotionally, or otherwise- was abhorrent to him. It was the lowest act possible. He could never dishonor himself or his beloved William that way. Additionally, harming an Omega went against all of his instincts, which so deeply governed his kills. (He wondered, vaguely, if Jack Crawford and the FBI had noticed that none of his victims were ever Omega. Will had, even if he hadn't noticed that he had noticed. Brilliant boy.)

Hannibal locked himself in his study with his tablet and a bottle of scotch. He would find a way out of this for Will, no matter how long it took. There was no way this could be allowed to happen. Will was not a piece of meat to be fought over. He was no one's prize! (Well he was actually quite a prize, but in a very different sense, Hannibal conceded.) For hours he poured over the legal information surrounding the Dominance Fights, looking for loopholes. With each passing hour, Hannibal got more angry and less hopeful. The Fights were ironclad. There was no way to get an unbonded Omega out of one without winning.

Hannibal was slowly losing ground to imaginings of Will being taken home by another Alpha, forcibly bonded, forcibly bred. He could see another, faceless alpha with his hand in Will's chocolate curls, biting his neck, rutting into him from behind. He could see Will with a round belly and a miserable life. He could see little children with Will's curls and blue eyes, running around while the empathy slowly faded away. He could see Will being locked away as his gift caused his mind to degenerate and he was given no help by the alpha who could never understand such beauty or brilliance.

He had to work very hard not to throw his glass of scotch at a wall. He opened the drawer to his desk and pulled out a small framed picture that he kept locked in there. It was from about three months ago when Hannibal had been invited along with the BAU team to celebrate ending a case he had helped close. They had gone to a small, tasteful pub which he had imagined nicer than their usual dive out of deference to his coming along. Beverly Katz was friends with the owner and so they were given a private room. Someone had brought a camera –he suspected Ms. Katz- and once they were all good and drunk, it had been passed around for pictures. An exercise that was probably performed to get blackmail on Jack Crawford ended up providing Hannibal with his only picture of him and Will together.

It was a perfect moment captured in time. Will had been a bit drunk and, with some coaxing from "Team Sassy Science," he had been doing parlor trick analyses of those gathered. In the picture his fair cheeks were flushed from alcohol and pleasure, his hair was a bit mussed from running his hand through it, and he was laughing. There was a smile on his face and he was laughing after having revealed some embarrassing detail about Zeller. Hannibal had been sitting next to him, looking up at the empathy as he stood and leaned forward against the table, politely smiling at the younger man. He was likely the only one who could see past the politeness to the true expression on his own face. No one else would notice the look of adoration.

He idly wondered, staring down at that blissful image, if Will had a copy of the picture. Ms. Katz had simply handed him a stack of images from that night the next time she saw him, in line with her usual abrupt manner, and he had dug through them later. He didn't know if he had the only copy of this picture. He wasn't sure if he hoped so or not. Sighing, Hannibal put the frame back into the drawer of his desk and went to a different website. There was only one way he could protect Will, and he knew what he had to do. He dialed the 24/7 hotline number presented on the webpage.

"Thank you for calling the Alpha Dominance Fights registration hotline. Please listen carefully to the options, and select the one that best suits your needs. If you would like to register for a fight…."

Will was standing in the middle of his living room when the van from the Omega Governance Board pulled up. He had gotten his neighbor to agree to find homes for his dogs and packed a suitcase last night. A rather burly Beta stepped out of the passenger's seat and started making his way up to the front door. Will finished his goodbyes to his dogs and grabbed his bag. He was about to open the door and meet his doom when he paused for a moment. His whole current life was being taken from him, but he had no desire to forget it. He quickly went back into what was supposed to be his bedroom, ignoring the knocking that started on his front door. He opened his night stand and took out a small photo album which he tucked into his bag. Then he went back into the living room and grabbed the two picture frames he kept near his bed. One picture was of him and his dad when he was seven years old. He had just caught an 11 pound bass and couldn't have been prouder of himself. The second was a picture of him and Hannibal at a pub after they had solved a particularly grueling case. It was his only picture of his only friend, so he tucked it into his bag as well. The knocking started again, even more insistently, Will decided to get it over with. He went out to the Beta and didn't bother locking his door. He would never be back at that house, what did it matter what happened to it?

Will got into the van with three other Omegas and tried to avoid looking anyone in the eye. Part of him ruefully wondered if Hannibal had done as he had said he would, and look for a way to get Will out of this. Will knew there was no way. He was going to be given to whichever Alpha won his fight. The van pulled away from Will's little boat on the ocean, and he tried vainly to let go of the dread that filled him as they drove towards the arena.

Chapter End Notes

How many different bathrooms are needed in the Omegaverse? I'm thinking six. Maybe four. Answer in the comments! Also I'm sorry for however many times "empath" autocorrected to "empathy." I will try to fix it.
XOXO

The Breath Before the Plunge

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for the amazing comments, kudos, and support! I had no idea that this was going to be so well received, and by so many people! It's incredible for me, as a writer, to know that I'm doing a good job.

I have decided to torture you all, just a little. The next chapter of the story is going to be delayed a bit, in favor of a one shot inspired by all of the comments about how Hannibal HAS TO WIN. I know he does. However, what would happen if he didn't? The one shot is going to be published in this same series between later today and 07/11. Probably closer to later today. I'm almost done with it. After that, BLOOD AND TEETH!

And now, for your reading pleasure, Will's last moments of freedom. Sort of. Enjoy!

XOXO

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The dorms attached to the D.C. arena were actually quite nice. They were sponsored by Westin, so that stood to reason. Will managed to get a room to himself because there were an odd number of Omegas and everyone else wanted the comfort of having someone else close by. Pretty typical Omega reasoning. Despite knowing that there were three days before the Fights, he didn't bother to unpack. He honestly didn't want to face packing back up again after his new Alpha won him. If he would even be allowed to keep his stuff, he wanted it packed up and ready to go.

At breakfast the next morning Will sat in between two terrified Omegas –one male, one female- and poked at the mess that was being called scrambled eggs. Hannibal had absolutely spoiled him for this kind of food. That thought came with a painful twinge in his gut as Will remembered that he would never eat the doctor's food again; in fact, he would likely be the one preparing all of the food for his new Alpha. I should have paid more attention while Hannibal was cooking, Will thought.

An Alpha who looked every bit like a stubborn politician, with his white hair and unimaginative suit, walked to the lectern at the front of the room. "Attention, attention all." The quiet buzz of conversation died down. "Welcome, Omegas, to this year's Alpha Dominance Fights!" He sounded like he expected applause. Will could have sworn the Omega next to him imitated cricket noises. "In two days the Fights will begin and you lucky Omegas will be won by the Alphas that prove themselves to be the strongest. You will begin your lives anew with your Alphas…or perhaps I should say your lives will truly begin. You will soon fulfill your biological imperative and your greatest desire as Omegas. My

congratulations to you. Now, Mr. Hollinger will explain the course of events that will last for the next week and end in you all going home to your Alphas!"

The male Omega to Will's right snorted. "I think my greatest desire as an Omega is to shove that guy's tie in his mouth until he stops talking." He extended a hand to Will. "Matthew Brown."

"Will Graham."

"Volunteer?"

"No way in hell."

"Me neither. Fuck all these guys. Alphas will never know what it's like to be bought and sold like chattel. Or worse, won by whichever proves that he can hit the hardest."

"Now now," Began the woman across from Matthew. "These fights are a time honored way of Alphas proving their dominance and winning their rightful prize." Will rethought the label of 'woman.' She barely looked old enough to be there, and she obviously carried-

"Some bullshit romantic notion. Look, kid, life isn't how Hollywood made it out to be. Do you know that your Alpha can beat you to death and face no punishment? As long as you don't die within 24 hours, he can beat you to death. Because you mean nothing. He'll just come back to the fights and win a new chew toy," Matthew growled.

The girl blinked. "Well I have nothing to worry about because I would never displease my Alpha that severely. I will endeavor never to displease my Alpha at all. He, or she, will never have cause to beat me."

"Somebody went to obedience school," Will mumbled.

Matthew laughed but the girl looked offended. "Excuse me," Came a loud voice from the podium. "We are trying to go over this week's schedule. Is there something more important you would like for us to discuss?" Mr. Hollinger was staring right at them. Will felt the eggs call his eyes down to them, but Matthew stood up.

"We were just talking about obedience school. Since Omegas are nothing but dogs, you know." There was a shocked silence for a moment, before two Betas came and began forcing Matthew away. Mr. Hollinger went back to the schedule like nothing had happened. The girl looked at Will in horror, but then her expression cleared. He could tell what she was thinking –he shouldn't have displeased an Alpha.

Will had a feeling that this was going to be a very long rest of his life.

After breakfast, Will was taken to the clinic that was adjacent to the dorms. Like all Omegas who were on hormone blockers, he was going to have them taken away and be given a shot

to force them out of his system. He dreaded that for more than one reason. His hormone blockers not only helped him masquerade as a Beta, but they also helped him somewhat control the side effects of his empathy. He didn't feel his emotions as strongly with the pills muting them; without them, he was left open to everyone and he had to feel all of it. As the syringe was pushed and the liquid surged into his blood stream, Will wondered if a mating bond would drive him insane. It probably would.

Will slept for the entire rest of the day, giving him only one more day to prepare before he was handed over to a brutal Alpha. There were worse ways to relax and prepare, he reasoned, than what the Omega Governance Board had set up. Hell, if he weren't being forcibly taken from everything he had ever known, basically being pushed into slavery, he would have enjoyed it. The last day before the Fights basically amounted to a spa day.

First came a healthy breakfast of fruit and yogurt. Then the Omegas were bussed to a nondescript building just a few miles away. Once inside, Will couldn't help but think that it was the kind of place Hannibal might frequent. Or maybe Alana, if she felt like really spoiling herself. Everything was cool marble in varying shades of blue. It was quiet and calming, all of the employees Betas who had clearly been chosen for their soft touch and charm. Will was taken into a small, bright room and told to take off his clothes and put on the robe and slippers. Five minutes later a Beta came back for him. "Hi, I'm Amy. I'll be taking care of you today. If you'll follow me, Mr. Graham, we'll start your day."

His day started off in a steam room, where he was pleased to see Matthew Brown again. The other Omega raised a hand in greeting. "If it were going to be like this every day, I wouldn't mind having an Alpha," the other man said. Will agreed. His next stop was a warm room where zen-style meditation music was playing. He was plopped down into a weird looking chair while Amy mixed up a bowl of lovely lavender and lemon smelling goo, which she rubbed onto his face in circular motions. As she did that, someone massaged his feet. He was almost disappointed that there were no cucumbers for his eyes. What kind of spa was this? The mixture was gently wiped off his face in circular motions and something that smelled like nice, clean dirt was put in its place.

He was led to a table next, where he was stripped naked and told to lie down, he would enjoy this part. That was a little worrying. His skin was gently scrubbed off with what felt like sand , then he was basically hosed off and more clean dirt (which Will vaguely realized was clay) was smoothed onto his entire body. Then he was wrapped in a plastic tarp, given cucumbers for his eyes –finally- and left under a heat lamp to bake. Hannibal had once prepared a meal this way. Will wondered how he would taste.
When Amy came back to help him wash off the clay, she told him that the treatment had only lasted for an hour because any longer would make the clay get caught in his hair and harden. Apparently she had seen it before and it was nasty. Will was given back his robe and taken to a bathtub full of scented water, and invited to stay for as long as he wanted. Amy left him alone with a flute of champagne and a plate of little finger sandwiches and, worst of all, his thoughts.

Will had been doing a very good job of not-thinking since he had left his house. That was something of a miracle, if he was honest with himself. Something about this place was just distracting. The dorm rooms, the spa, the constant Beta presence…it was keeping him from panicking. Of course now that he was actively thinking about it, the panic was beginning to well up in his chest, pushing its way up his throat until it burst out of his mouth in a sob. Fate had ever dealt him a raw hand, but this was as bad as it had ever gotten.

When Will had started taking hormone suppressants, his life had infinitely improved in just a few days. He got a job as a cop. People stopped treating him like he was a stupid, delicate, fragile thing. He was allowed to have opinions in public and people stopped asking him when he was going to become a "real" Omega and bond and have kids for his Alpha. When he had gotten stabbed, all of that was threatening to change. Will had to leave the New Orleans Police Department. He went to college and got a job at the FBI academy. Two years ago Jack Crawford walked into his lecture hall and basically promised his protection in exchange for Will's brain. It had seemed worth it at the time.
He worked for Jack on and off for a year, until the Minnesota Shrike case. Until he met Hannibal, and was deemed sane enough to work for Jack on a more permanent basis. Will had been uncertain of Hannibal, even a little pissed about Jack forcing a shrink on him, until Hannibal had saved Abigail Hobbs' life and endeared himself to Will. That was when he stopped being "Dr. Lecter" and started, slowly, timidly, being Will's friend. Working together made them Jack's dream team. Not only did Hannibal do a pretty damn good job at keeping Will sane, but he could also do a fair amount of forensic profiling himself. Beverly, Price, and Zeller also behaved themselves around him. Will just enjoyed the freedom to look with minimal consequences.

He remembered one night, about three months ago, when he had shown up at Hannibal's house at 11:30 at night, drenched in sweat, and not knowing where else to go. He had lost time and been chased by a feathered deer into the middle of the highway. It was not a good night. Thankfully the trucker that had avoided hitting him managed to wake him up and offered to drive him to the hospital. He had been more than happy to oblige when Will asked to be taken to his therapist instead. (Little did Will know that "Big Mike" had bought himself a permanent place on Hannibal's exclusive "Do Not Eat" list. Of course Will didn't even know that he himself was on that list. He didn't know there was a list. He didn't know Hannibal was a cannibalistic serial killer.)

He had learned that night that Hannibal smokes, when incredibly stressed. It is the only tell he has, leaning out the kitchen window while he thinks Will is still in the bathroom, puffing away on two cigarettes in quick succession. If Will hadn't seen him do it, he never would have known. He couldn't even smell it on the other man. Hannibal gave him a barely-there sheepish look and tossed the pack in a drawer with pens and notepads, the only thing Hannibal had resembling a junk drawer. "Stressed, Dr. Lecter?" Will had teased. He only said "Dr. Lecter" when he was teasing now; otherwise it was always "Hannibal." He considered it a feat that he felt comfortable enough with the other man to tease him.

"I am afraid you are going to give me an aneurism, Will, wandering onto a highway at night."

"And so your solution to that is smoking? Tsk tsk, I thought you were a doctor."

“I am a doctor, so why don’t you tell me what’s bothering you enough to make you sleepwalk again. You haven’t done so for a while.”

“Well let’s not beat around the bush. And it wasn’t sleepwalking. I was awake, I just lost time. I think it happened when that deer was chasing me.” Will didn’t know why he was suddenly telling Hannibal about the stag he had been seeing ever since the Copycat’s first kill. Maybe it was because this felt nothing like therapy. Maybe it was because he now knew one of Hannibal’s secrets. “I have this vivid hallucination of a black stag with bird feathers. Sometimes it just stands there, sometimes it just follows me around, and sometimes it chases me.”

Hannibal paused for a moment. “When did it first appear?”

“In Minnesota, when the Copycat killed Cassie Boyle.”

“That was nine months ago.”

“I know that. I know I should have told you sooner.”

Hannibal shook his head and guided them into the living room. He gestured for Will to sit in a delightfully comfortable armchair that seemed to occupy a place of honor in the room. It was only now, as Will reflected on it in the tub, that he realized it was Hannibal’s preferred seat. And he had given it to Will. “You can only reveal things to me when you are ready,” Will repeated Hannibal’s words. “I am glad you are comfortable enough to do so now.”

Will watched Hannibal take a seat on the couch and cross his legs. He looked every bit as collected in silk pajamas and a bath robe as he did in his three piece suits. “Have you tried approaching the stag?”

“Approaching it? No, I tend to go the other way when I see it in a hallway.”

“You seem to think it means you harm. It could be your subconscious trying to tell you something important. You say it chases you, but is it really what you are running from?” Will thought at that for a moment. “I have watched it kill people, when they’re standing in front of me.”

“Who?” Hannibal asked.

“Who? People. I didn’t even always know them. Just…people.”

“Were they people you didn’t like? People you felt threatened by, or who were angering you?”

Will gaped. Yes, that was exactly who the stag killed. “Do you remember that last case we solved, the one in Alexandria?”

“Yes, a mad Alpha killing people who were loud in the library.” Not that Will knew, but Hannibal had approved of that killer’s actions. Being loud in a library was terribly rude.

“I knew who he was when the stag killed him,” Will admitted quietly. He watched quite a range of micro-expressions dance across Hannibal’s face for a moment, before ending in a slight upturn at the corners of his mouth.

“You may not need to run from this raven stag in your mind. It may be trying to help you. It is likely a manifested part of your mind,” He gave Will a solid once over. “To be perfectly honest with you, William, I would be terribly worried about that stag coming from anyone else. From you, I think it is a coping mechanism that you have not learned to embrace. Part of your mind is seeking to protect you from the people around you. Of course, I am still incredibly worried about you. You lost time and wandered for who knows how long before that trucker found you and brought you somewhere safe.”

“Is this a safe place, Hannibal?” Will hadn’t meant for Hannibal to hear his question, but the older man stood and walked to him, putting his hand on top of sweaty curls.

“This is a safe place, Will. Anywhere I am will be a safe place for you.” Will looked up to see a small, but utterly genuine smile on the doctor’s face. He felt safe in that house. He felt safe with Hannibal. “I think perhaps it is time for you to sleep. Come, you can stay here tonight.”

Will hadn’t bothered to protest, he just followed Hannibal up the stairs and into the indicated guest bedroom. That night he had a peaceful sleep. He hadn’t seen the stag in waking time since, but he could never seem to approach it in his dreams. Will wondered if he would see the stag again with his new Alpha. What would happen if he went to one of the members of the Board and told them he hallucinated? Would he be let go? Would he be put in an institution? That was probably better than what was waiting for him tomorrow. It wasn’t a viable option, though. The Board often advocated that unbonded Omegas only had mental health issues because they weren’t bonded. Most bonded Omegas didn’t have significant problems. That’s why “Bonding is Best” had become such a popular slogan in the medical industry.

Where was the panic that had filled him in Hannibal’s office? He had had a panic attack after telling the therapist what was happening to him, so where was that feeling now? Will felt nothing. He was numb. Shock? That had to be it. He was in shock. He hated what was happening, he hated the Omega Governance Board, he hated the Alpha Dominance Fights, he hated his future Alpha…but he couldn’t seem to put any passion into it. So he downed the champagne and ate the sandwiches even though he had just had lunch. When his belly was full, he just felt even less angry. In fact this whole thing didn’t seem like anything he needed to panic over.

“Son of a bitch,” Will tried to yell as he tried to jump up in the tub. Instead it came out as an almost surprised whisper, and he stood quite slowly. There were sedatives in the food and drink. He was being given compliance drugs because he wasn’t a volunteer. He wasn’t freaking out because he couldn’t. “That’s it Will, you’re going to bed without supper,” he scolded in his best imitation of his father.

After his bath came a light lunch, and then Amy was leading Will back into the room with the table. He was given a light massage, before the masseur pulled away with a confused look. He grabbed Amy and whispered something to her, which made her look surprised. “We’ll be right back,” She assured him. When she did return, it was with one of the biggest Beta

women he had ever seen. She proceeded to give him an intense massage that forced all of the tension from his muscles and left him a content pile of goo. He gave full credit to his masseur, not even to the drugs. That women could work the tensions out of a rampaging bull rhino.

Still feeling gooey, Will was led into a nice looking salon and put in a big, squishy chair with a foot bath. He had never gotten a manicure or pedicure before that, and he decided that he never would again. He was not some little doll to be pampered…! He tried to think that with some force, but his brain was positively sluggish. He wanted to call Hannibal and ask if there was a quick way of getting compliance drugs out of his system, but his phone had been taken so he didn't have the doctor's number. Contemplating this, he completely missed how the Betas shaved his face and neck and trimmed his hair a bit, before fluffing it up to make it look as curly as possible. When they showed him a mirror, he realized that they had done everything possible to make him look younger and show off the delicate lines of his face.

Will skipped dinner, and then refused breakfast the next morning. One of the Betas teased him for being so excited about the Fights that he couldn't even eat. Will let him think that, instead of telling him that he knew the non-volunteers were being drugged. His little act of defiance pleased him.

After breakfast all of the Omegas were lined up in a room behind one-way glass so that they could be viewed by the Alphas. Often times Alphas fought blind, not really caring what their perspective Omega looked like. The designation was well known for being attractive. They were all small and purportedly delicate, and even male Omegas tended to look feminine. Still, some Alphas wanted to see the Omegas and fight for the one they found most attracted. He was handed a small board that read "W. Graham 6593," so that any interested Alphas could sign up to fight for Will Graham in fight 6593.

Behind the one-way glass, Will couldn't see Hannibal staring at him longingly. He missed the murderous look the doctor gave to the two other Alphas who dared sign up for his fight.

Being a "G," Will's fight was on the second day. Fights were done five letters at a time, except for on the last day when there were six. He skipped lunch and dinner again, but luck was on his side when he managed to find a vending machine. They might have taken his phone, but they hadn't taken his wallet. Will feasted on powdered donuts, beef jerky, and a Coke. That seemed to push the last of the compliance drugs out of his system, making Will feel almost hyper alert. His hormone blockers were almost out of him too, so he was beginning to notice things more vividly with his "gift."

He sat up in his room and worried about Matthew Brown, who had been won today by a Doctor Able Gideon. Dr. Gideon was famous for having killed his last Omega after she displeased him, and then killing her parents too. Will couldn't fathom how he had gotten out of that mess with only a year in jail, but he had heard that the man was charismatic. He hadn't seen Matthew since the line up, so he hoped that he wasn't taking all of this too badly.

A knock sounded on his door, and Will got up to answer. To his surprise, it was the Omega girl he had talked to during his first breakfast. “I’m sorry to bother you so late,” She began. “It’s just that you’re the only person I know here.” Will could keenly feel her distress. It permeated every part of her and seeped out in tendrils. He stepped back to let her in.

“No problem. We’re all in this together, I guess. What’s wrong?”

She began to sob, loudly. “I just found out that my brother was killed in the Fights. He was fighting for a pretty young Omega this morning. He was actually the first kill of the day.” Ouch, Will thought. The first kill of the day was the one that really incited the blood lust in the crowd. He sat her down on the bed. “I’m very sorry your brother died. But you know that happens all the time in these Fights.”

“I know,” She wailed. “I just never thought it would be my brother. You know how some high schools have Fight Teams?” Will had gone to one such high school; all of the biggest and baddest Alphas got together to beat the shit out of each other, and then beat the shit out of Alphas from other schools. Killing was against the rules, but it was supposed to prepare them for the real Fights. Will just nodded his understanding. “Well Kevin was the best. He was almost undefeated.”

That was a pretty common story. The big Alpha on a small campus came to the Arena and got killed in his first fight. “Things are very different like this,” Will pressed the heels of his hands into his eyes, feeling an empathy headache coming on. He could see her with her brother. Kevin had adored his sister, he had protected her. They had been best friends. That was why he waited until her year as a prize before he entered the Fights himself. He wanted to see her off. It had been a tribute to his little sister. “Things are very different when killing is allowed. Your brother was good at fighting with restraint. He would have fared well in the European arenas where they don’t allow killing anymore. He did this for you, you know.”

“He did?”

“He wanted to say goodbye in a special way. He was honoring you and your bond to the Alpha that will win you during the Fights.” Her sobs got harder and began to make her shake. “Hey, there…” Will realized he still didn’t know her name. “Breathe, sweetie. I know it’s hard but you don’t want your eyes all puffy tomorrow. You go tomorrow, like me, right?”

“R-right,” She seemed to be choking on air now, and Will recognized the panic attack immediately. He had them often enough. He stroked her back and whispered to her and made those ridiculous shushing noises that shouldn’t have been as calming as they were.

“Tell me your name, sweetie,” He whispered.

“Katherine,” She was finally starting to breathe normally again. “Kat. Kevin called me Kitty.”

“You’re going to be won tomorrow, Kat. It’s your big day.”

“It’s your big day too,” Kat insisted. “I looked at the rosters. You have four Alphas fighting over you tomorrow. That’s amazing!”

“Four?” Will whispered. He had figured it would be the standard two. A Fight was between however many Alphas signed up to fight for a particular Omega –the modern record was 16, though people insisted that there had been between 31-45 fighting over Helen of Troy- but it was usually only two or three. Will couldn’t imagine four Alphas wanting to fight over him. Lovely. That meant whoever won him was going to be someone brutal enough to kill three other Alphas in thirty minutes. He had no doubts that the Fight would end in death –larger Fights always did.

That small, primal part of his brain that was all Omega was flattered. Excited. He would have four Alphas fighting to the death for the right to claim him. That really shouldn’t have made his heart pound the way it did. The mere thought should have repulsed him. But deep down, that part of him that had always hated being alone, he was thrilled.

Will lost time that night. He couldn’t remember anything he said to Kat after that, he couldn’t remember going to bed. When he came back to himself he was standing on a podium in the middle of the Arena, with the stag at his side, nuzzling his hand. He was being announced as the prize in fight 6593 among not two, not three, but four Alphas! What an event! This was the biggest Fight of the year! Will was taken off of the podium and lead up to a balcony. “Do you want to watch?” A Beta asked him.

Yes, screamed that little part of his brain from last night. “No,” he replied. He didn’t want to watch three Alphas die for him. Yes, yes he did, came a thought from the ravenstag. No, Will argued back, turning away from the creature and heading into the waiting room. He could hear the announcer introducing the combatants and he could hear the screams of the crowd, but he couldn’t make out the names. He probably wouldn’t know them anyway.

This was it. This, right here, was his last half hour of freedom. After this, he belonged to someone else. Will’s heart was thundering in his chest and his breathing was too fast. He didn’t want this. He wasn’t ready for this. He could hear the crowd scream excitedly, in a way that could only mean one of the combatants was dead. Already? That hadn’t taken long. Not even five minutes. What the hell kind of Alpha was he getting here? The stag was back. “I should name you, you’re here often enough,” Will told the creature, which just gave him a haughty look.

Not even ten minutes later, the crowd roared again. The second challenger was dead. With just over 15 minutes to go in the Fight, it was down to two Alphas. Will felt himself getting hysterical. “Nightmare Stag! That’s what you are! Hahahaha!” Ten minutes to go. “What is your name, O Nightmare Stag? I should give you a really stupid name, one that offends your dignity. You remind me of Hannibal. I wonder if he’s watching my fight at home. He’s probably too dignified for that. You are too, that’s why you’re here with me. You have dignity, instead of….” He racked his brain for that stupid word kids these days were using. “Swag, that’s it. You have dignity instead of swag. I have neither. That’s going to be your name: Swiggity Swag the Nightmare Stag.” Hysterical laughter bubbled up in Will’s chest and he wasn’t sure if he was going to vomit if he let it out.

Three minutes to go. The stag was pacing, agitated. For a moment, everything went completely silent. Will’s head shot up. What did that mean? A moment more of silence, then

the crowd exploded into noise. So. His Fight had been won. He now belonged to an Alpha. Swiggity came over and, rather than goring Will for that stupid name, as he so rightly deserved, he nuzzled against the man's throat. "Yep, I'm about the get bit there. How fun."

A Beta came and opened the waiting room door. She was grinning ear to ear. "That was incredible; the best fight I've ever seen and I've worked here for almost ten years. He killed three other Alphas to get to you. Come on, he deserves to get to see you." Will followed, because there was nothing else he could do. He was taken down a long corridor out into the arena itself. For a moment the sun hit him right in the eyes, but he raised his hand to shield himself against it. His jar dropped.

Standing in the middle of the arena, covered in blood, surrounded by corpses, waited Will's new Alpha.

Chapter End Notes

As ever, this is not beta-read because they're all too busy watching the Fights and cheering for Hannibal. The He-Ate-Us is driving them insane, poor things. If you see any mistakes, please let me know. I'm also still getting used to the formatting on AO3 so some of the paragraphs may be off. Empath autocorrects to empathy. I can't figure out how to italicize, so none of the thoughts are italicized.

Fight for What is Yours

Chapter Summary

Are you ready for the Fight?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Seeing Will in the Omega line up had done Hannibal some good. The man looked healthy and well taken care of, but hungry. In the past three weeks, Hannibal had prepared most of Will's food himself, either fresh or for the man to reheat. He probably couldn't stomach what they were feeding him here. That pleased Hannibal greatly.

"Oh wow, he's a nice one!" Hannibal turned to the giant lump of underbred Alpha next to him, who was also looking at Will. "I can't imagine how proud my dad would be if I brought a male Omega home. The fights for them are always the hardest." *Damn right,* Hannibal thought, *and a pudding bowl like you would never survive one.* The Alpha smelled like cheese. It was so undignified. The cheese-lump held his hand out to Hannibal. "I'm Franklyn."

Hannibal forced himself to be civil and shake the cheese man's hand. "Dr. Lecter. Is this your first Fight?"

"Oh yes!" Franklyn chirped. "Yours?"

"Not at all," Hannibal allowed some small pride to color his words. "I had a kill in my last one."

"Wow," Franklyn was awed. "So why are you back?"

"I have taken a liking to that particular Omega. I will fight for him, and only for him." He hoped Franklyn understood his tone and decided to fight for another Omega.

"That sounds romantic," Franklyn didn't understand the hint. Idiot. He signed his name under Hannibal's to fight for Will. At least he would be an easy kill.

"Franklyn, you are aware that the fight for Mr. Graham will be a death match, are you not?" Another Alpha approached with all the grace of a stalking wildcat. Hannibal noticed something familiar in the man's eyes, and almost smiled. Another, like him. Lovely. The man held out his hand to Hannibal. "I am Tobias Budge. I will also be fighting in 6593. Truly I have never seen an Omega as lovely as this one, and I hear he has some sort of special talent that he uses for the FBI."

Franklyn didn't have the common sense to back out of the conversation. "A death match? But Tobias, you know they don't have to be to the death. Why ruin the sportsmanship of the event?"

"Because killing is enjoyable," Tobias replied, never taking his eyes off of Hannibal.

"To kill for that special Omega is thrilling," Hannibal added. "Do you not enjoy killing, Franklyn?"

"Well like I said," he simpered. "This is my first Fight. I've never killed before. Maybe I should just go for a different Omega."

"Once you sign your name, you have to fight," Hannibal reminded him. "You can't back out now."

Franklyn gulped and looked a little green. "Well, I'll see if there is some way. I didn't realize things would be so brutal. I would rather not be involved."

"If you are unwilling to kill for Will, you don't deserve him anyway," Hannibal stated calmly. Franklyn didn't know how to respond, so he just scuttled away. Tobias smiled.

"So you know the Omega you're fighting for? Curious that you didn't mate him before all of this. Or did you just want to fight him?"

"Yes I know Will. I know that will is *mine* and I will kill you if you get in my way. I hadn't had the chance to properly court Will, but now I will. You will not have him."

"We'll see about that."

Hannibal didn't dignify that with a response. No one else would have Will. No one would take Will by force. He would protect that beautiful man with everything in him, and there was no "or he would die trying" option. Failure would mean more than not getting what he wanted; it would mean destroying Will's life.

Hannibal knew that Tobias was a killer, just like him. There was just something kindred he recognized in the other Alpha, and he knew was recognized in him in turn. It wasn't hard to tell, if you knew what you were looking for. Tobias was dangerous for Will, in more ways than one. He could not be trusted not to hurt the empath. Hannibal knew that he was the only one who could ever truly protect Will and help him flourish; he would certainly never hurt the man. As soon as they got out of that arena, it would be straight to the hospital to treat that delicious-smelling encephalitis that was eating at the Omega's perfect brain.

Hannibal ate a good dinner, knowing it was best to skip breakfast before a Fight, and made sure to get plenty of sleep. He was probably the oldest Alpha in the entire competition. Tobias had to be at least ten years younger than him, and he was obviously well muscled and aggressive. That didn't matter though. Hannibal would only have been at a disadvantage in a non-killing Fight, where he would have to restrain himself. Allowed to let his true nature shine, Hannibal was a fine tuned instrument of death's own hand. His added years only meant added experience. He would win.

Hannibal didn't bother watching any of the Fights before his. He didn't need to learn any techniques; he had competed before. Upon finding out that Will's Fight would be at two in the afternoon, he changed his mind about breakfast and decided it was enough to skip lunch. No sense in not fueling his body properly. He would not lose just because he hadn't eaten enough to keep up his strength.

While other Alphas prepared by hyping each other up, going crazy on punching bags, or watching the Fights, he had a very different approach. Hannibal sat in his hotel room listening to Mendelssohn and meditating on his photo of Will. He needed to see that carefree smile again. He would never again see that defeated expression that had graced the empath's beautiful features in his office, the night he had told Hannibal he had to leave.

Hannibal could envision their life together so clearly it was like he was watching it in front of him. Will would be grateful for Hannibal winning his freedom; he would spend the next year –the minimum amount of time an Alpha had to keep a fought-for Omega- allowing Hannibal to court him properly, the way one as spectacular as himself deserved. Will would see that Hannibal was the right Alpha for him, and they would mate. Their bond would be unbreakable. He would see what truly lay in Hannibal's heart, but he would not run for that darkness. He would hunt with his Alpha, a beautiful predator using his sharply-honed empathy to create the most beautiful art out of the basest elements. Hannibal shivered in delight at the thought of Will bringing him meat for their table. Will was the only one capable of catching him, and with him on Hannibal's side, Jack Crawford and the FBI would be chasing a ghost for eternity while the mates lived to their fullest potential.

Hannibal would awaken that potential within Will with their bond. It amazed him that he had never considered it before; it was so much more obvious than framing him for the murder of Abigail Hobbs and as many other people as he could reasonably fit in. The obviousness must have been why he had overlooked it. If Will came to love him enough to willingly bond with him, then his empathy would allow nothing but understanding and acceptance of what he saw in Hannibal's mind once the bond was solidified. Seeing the elegant darkness in Hannibal would bring it out in Will. They would truly be equals.

At two o'clock Hannibal stood in the waiting area, a tunnel right out of the Hollywood design of a gladiator arena. Will was being walked out onto a podium and announced as the prize for this fight, which would be between four Alphas. Hannibal had been surprised to learn that his own colleague, Dr. Frederick Chilton, would be fighting for Will as well. It seemed that the unworthy fool wanted a glimpse into Will's fantastic mind. He was unsurprised to see that Franklyn hadn't been able to get out of the Fight. The rules were absolute: once you signed your name, you had to fight.

Will was taken away and the crowd seemed to hold its breath in anticipation. The overly dramatic portcullis was raised and the four Alphas walked out into the arena. The waiting crowd screamed, but Hannibal ignored them to look for Will. Disappointingly, he had apparently opted not to watch the fight and therefore was nowhere to be seen. Hannibal would have loved for Will to watch him kill these three Alphas for him.

Hannibal came back to himself as the announcer finished introducing the combatants. He felt that lovely anticipation that always preceded a kill begin to tingle up his spine. This wouldn't be his usual art. He would not be able to elevate these men, but they didn't deserve it anyway. They would die as fools and wastes for daring to challenge him over his rightful Omega. The four Alphas spread out –there had to be 25 feet between each of them before the fight would start. Sufficiently separated, the announcer gave the go-ahead and there were more screams from the crowd

Hannibal analyzed the situation quickly. Tobias Budge was the greatest threat. He was the only Alpha who stood half a chance against Hannibal; he was a lean killer with obvious intelligence behind his eyes. Chilton was also intelligent, but he was an absolute academic. He was rather weak. Franklyn was no threat and couldn't even dominate a Beta, much less an Alpha of Hannibal's caliber.

Hannibal made the first move, and quickly stalked over to Franklyn. The man stared at him with wide eyes, seemingly not understanding Hannibal's intent until he was right up on him. He tried to back away, but Hannibal was faster. He punched the man in the throat, causing him to immediately begin gasping and choking. Hannibal then gripped his head and neck and, in a well-practiced motion, snapped his spine. Franklyn fell over dead, and the crowd roared their savage approval.

"I was looking forward to that," Tobias said offhandedly.

"I saved you the trouble," Hannibal replied. His blood was singing with delight. The killer in him was dancing with his Alpha nature and kill-mate-kill was swimming through his veins. He needed to kill; to rend flesh from bone and strew his enemies' entrails about the arena. He wanted to bite and force submission of these weaker Alphas.

Tobias was obviously content to do nothing and let Hannibal kill Franklyn and Chilton. Chilton had backed away from the other two Alphas, seeming to realize that he had made a mistake. He understood that he would not survive but, unlike Franklyn, when Hannibal came for him he decided to put up a fight. He managed a well-aimed kick into Hannibal's chest that forced him back several feet, allowing Chilton to drop into a crouch and spring forward with enough force to knock them both over. That ended up being a mistake, as Hannibal was easily able to get out of his hold and use his greater weight to pin Chilton instead.

Chilton fought still, raining blows down on Hannibal despite being in a disadvantaged position. He also clawed at the other Alpha's skin, drawing blood and enraging the killer further. Hannibal pelted Chilton with his own blows, easily striking his head over and over until he had broken the man's nose, knocked out most of his teeth, blackened both of his eyes, and broken his jaw. He then grabbed the other doctor's head and beat it once, twice, thrice upon the ground. Chilton stopped moving and Hannibal couldn't hear the cheers over the roar of his own blood. He stood up to face Tobias, only to feel a hand weakly grasp at his leg.

Oh, you weren't done? Hannibal's savage mind growled. He knelt back over Chilton and appeased his blood lust. He pressed his thumbs through the man's eyes, popping them, and digging past the ruined orbs to grip his skull in a dangerous hold. Once again he began hitting the man's head on the ground until finally he hit it with enough force to shatter his skull and

leave a bloody mess exploded outwards across nearly a meter of the arena. Satisfied that Chilton was absolutely dead and *he was the superior Alpha*, Hannibal once again turned to face Tobias.

The two Alphas began circling, an instinctive move during Dominance Fights. They were sizing each other up, looking for weakness and vulnerability. Tobias charged Hannibal, looking ready for a straight rush to attempt to pin him to the ground. Hannibal widened his stance to take the hit and Tobias feinted instead, pivoting on his left leg to kick Hannibal in the shoulder. He felt the crunch as it subluxated, but thankfully it was nothing worse and he was able to grab the leg and twist Tobias to the ground.

Hannibal immediately went for the pin, but the other Alpha wiled away from his grasp and punched him solidly in the face. His nose broke on impact and, deciding it probably couldn't get any worse, he head butted the other man. The pair, both scrambled, stumbled away from each other. Hannibal dared a glance at the clock –ten minutes left. He charged Tobias that time and got him with a very good punch to the solar plexus and another to the sternum before his opponent reached out and sank his nails into the meat where Hannibal's neck met shoulder. He hissed angrily and pulled back, despite the chunks of skin that remained in Tobias' hand. They came together again quickly and Tobias struck Hannibal twice more in the head, scattering him and making his vision blur. They began circling again, then fell together for a few more devastating blows, before they both had to pull away.

With less than six minutes left, Hannibal realized Tobias' strategy. He was an older Alpha and the other man thought he would win by wearing him down. Hannibal had the stamina of a Thoroughbred, but fighting Chilton and the blows to his head were beginning to wear on him. He was bleeding from places he didn't even know had been cut. Five minutes left. This had to be settled now. The time to measure his fellow killer was over –it was time to end this.

Hannibal charged Tobias for the last time, and the other man met him half way. They came together with enough force to knock each other to the ground, Tobias on top of Hannibal. Clearly he had observed Hannibal kill Chilton, for he began imitating that kill. He went for the head with every punch and managed to grab his head and bash it on the ground. Hannibal's vision was going black around the edges. He expected rage to kick in and fuel him forward, but instead he felt calm. His Alpha instincts yielded to the stronger predator inside of him, and he began to see with greater clarity. This wasn't an Alpha pissing contest. This was about Will.

The cold, calculating part of Hannibal's brain reemerged full force, provoking him to leave off where he had been trying to strangle the other Alpha and instead raise his hands to the man's eyes. Tobias had seen how Hannibal had burst Chilton's eyeballs, and flinched as he thought the same thing was going to happen to him. That momentary lapse gave Hannibal the time he needed to buck Tobias off. With him off balance, Hannibal pushed him down on his stomach. With one hand on the back of Tobias' head, the other braced on the ground, and a knee in Tobias' back he pressed the submissive position, humiliating the man before the crowd. Two minutes left. Tobias tried to buck him off. Hannibal threw himself forward and took the other Alpha's neck between his jaws, forcing him still. He shook, fracturing the neck

but not breaking it. He still fought, so Hannibal wrenched his arm back behind his body and broke it at the elbow and forearm, provoking a howl of pain.

One minute left. Hannibal flipped the other Alpha over and began raining down blows as he had with Chilton. Thirty seconds. He didn't have time for this. Aware that it would leave him unsteady but willing to risk it, Hannibal went for Tobias' throat. He sank his teeth into the flesh as he heard a countdown from fifteen. He sank his teeth in farther and began to shake. Nine. Eight. Seven. Farther, farther, *there!* Six. Five. Four. Hannibal's teeth dug into the flesh and he felt it separate. Triumphantly he jerked his head back, taking out most of Tobias' throat with him, and rose to his feet. The countdown stopped.

Hannibal slowly raised his head to look at the Fight organizers. Aware that all eyes were on him, he let the flesh drop out of his mouth. There was silence, for a moment, before the arena erupted in a furor of screams and cheers. Franklyn was dead. Chilton was dead. Tobias was dead. Hannibal had killed them all for Will. He had won. Will was his.

On the side of the arena opposite where the Alphas had entered, another large portcullis was being opened. Hannibal turned to face it head on, knowing what, or rather, who, was coming for him. He tried to calm his breathing and pull himself together, knowing that he did not look as immaculate as he usually did. Will probably wouldn't care. Hannibal had just killed three Alphas. Looking messy came with that territory.

Will looked every bit as well groomed as he had the day before, and he was dressed in slacks and a polo shirt, but his cheeks were flushed and his eyes were wild. Hannibal thought he looked beautiful. He took a step towards his Omega, but stopped when Will froze in place. Will hadn't known that Hannibal was fighting for him. Shock permeated his expressive features and something else flitted along with it. Dismay? Anger? Betrayal? Hannibal couldn't entirely place it as he stared at the lines of Will's open mouth and wide eyes. He began to feel that this might be harder than he had thought. He took a few more steps towards Will.

That seemed to wake the younger man from his shock. The pure surprise on his face softened into something resembling gratitude and, dare Hannibal hope, *happiness*? Will closed the remaining space between them rapidly, throwing his arms around Hannibal's neck regardless of his injuries. Hannibal was so relieved that he didn't hear the pathetic "Aww" from the crowd as they appreciate the sight of an Omega clinging to his new Alpha.

Will's head fit firmly under Hannibal's chin as he held the Omega tightly. One hand went around his waist, the other threaded into his soft curls. They embraced tightly for a moment, before Will pulled away. "You fought for me. You did all of this so that I wouldn't be claimed by a stranger." Hannibal nodded. "Thank you," Will whispered, before he pulled away entirely. Hannibal wanted to pull him back until he realized what Will was doing.

Will hadn't quite known what to think when he saw Hannibal standing in the arena, covered in blood and waiting for him. He had never imagined that the depth of their friendship went so far that Hannibal would enter the Alpha Dominance Fights to prevent him from having to be mated to a stranger. When he had ran into his new Alpha's arms, he had felt a surge of

safety that he had never really known before. It was heady. His simple “Thank you” was hardly enough, so Will decided to thank Hannibal properly, as a truly grateful Omega.

Will watched Hannibal’s eyes go wide as he knelt down in front of 100,000 people to show his gratitude and, technically, his submission to his new Alpha. Will knew what it looked like he was doing, but he also knew that Hannibal would understand –Will wasn’t giving himself up, he was just appreciating what Hannibal had given him back. Out of the corner of his eye, Will saw the Ravenstag sniffing around the bodies in the arena. His brain revved at that sight and so many things began to connect in his mind.

The Ravenstag made its way over from the body of one of the combatants and walked straight into Hannibal. Will lifted his head from an appeasing, grateful position to look up at Hannibal, baring his throat in true submission and trust. The gold pendulum was swinging wildly around the man. As Will watched, the Ravenstag and Hannibal became one; the Alpha’s skin became black and a proud rack of antlers sprouted from his hair. “Oh,” Will breathed. Blood was pouring from around Hannibal like a fountain, drenching everything around them

The stag-man took a step forward and offered Will his hand. Hannibal was a murderer. Hannibal had killed three other Alphas to *save* Will. Hannibal was Will’s Alpha now. Will took the offered hand and allowed himself to be pulled to his feet. The blood and darkness began to fade from before his eyes and he just saw Hannibal before him, as if the two creatures –man and stag- could be separated and put into different parts of one life. Will knew that that wasn’t true, that Hannibal was a person truly complete in himself, connected to himself, but he felt nothing threatening coming off of the man in front of him. He could see danger when he looked into Hannibal’s curious eyes, but it was not directed at him. Whatever monster lived inside of Hannibal’s heart was no threat to him. When Will saw it, he nearly couldn’t believe what he was being shown in Hannibal’s eyes. The monster was no threat to him; the monster loved him. Hannibal loved him.

Hannibal’s lips crashed down on his own and he was consumed. Hannibal was a murderer. Will had never felt safer. The monster was no threat to Will. Hannibal loved Will. And Will, Will knew that he could not turn that monster away.

Chapter End Notes

Is anyone else annoyed that Hannibal got no Emmy nominations? I mean I know that the Emmy people are notorious for playing favorites and often for discriminating against shows with foreign leads (and both of Hannibal's leads are foreign) but this is ridiculous. In that vein I'll be rooting for Claire Danes with her Homeland nomination. I'll finish the next chapter quickly so that I can to inform the Emmy people how very rude they are.

Also in this chapter, Hannibal was calling Franklyn "Cheesy" in his head the entire time.

Rewarded

Chapter Notes

Sorry this was so long (for me) in coming. Turns out, smut is harder to write than I thought. I have a much greater appreciation for those who write it well. I hope mine is not too lacking.

I would like to take a moment to say thank you to everyone who has read this, everyone who has left kudos, and most especially to those who have commented. It is incredibly gratifying for me, as someone who decided to start writing fan fiction as a way of easing my nerves as I work on my writing sample to apply for my MFA in Creative Writing. Knowing that people like my work, and that you're comfortable with my writing style, is great since I'm freaking out about my work not being good enough to get me into grad school.

Finally, the appropriate song to listen to during this chapter is Sir Anthony Hopkins' "And the Waltz Goes On," which you can find on Youtube. The man wrote a waltz. An entire orchestral waltz. Fifty years ago. Is there anything he cannot do? See, that's why Mads needs his god-like cheekbones to be able to compete. Mmm, Mads Mikkelsen's cheekbones. If you don't like to read smut, just look at this picture for 25 minutes and it will accomplish the same thing: http://www.pinterest.com/pin/360569513889708564/ (Not my board, btw.)

XOXO

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's back hit the bed and he bounced slightly, but that only had a moment to register in his mind before Hannibal was on him again and how ridiculously comfortable the bed was no longer mattered. Hannibal's mouth was all over his chest and shoulders, but he conspicuously avoided Will's neck –he was grateful for that because, while he was willing and happy to have sex with the Alpha now, mating was not in his plan. Even if he couldn't bond outside of his Heat, he didn't want to bear those scars. They meant too much.

After Hannibal had pulled Will to his feet in the arena, they were swept away by a medical team and joined by a legal team. Hannibal had signed the paperwork taking responsibility (and ownership) of Will while he was being patched up from the Fight. Will had refused to leave his side, earning him approving looks from the Omega Governance Board officials who came to congratulate them. If he hadn't been so busy worrying about Hannibal and considering the implications of Hannibal being a murderer, it might have bothered him.

Paperwork signed, Hannibal half-dragged Will out to his waiting Bentley and drove them to a gorgeous hotel a few blocks away. Will's mind was slowly going hazy as he was caught up in the pheromones Hannibal was giving off; the Alpha was half high on his victory and the dominating part of his biology was telling him to take Will and *breed* him until his belly grew round with children. He actually managed to retain a semblance of calm though, as he led Will through the hotel and up into the room he had taken.

His control snapped, however, when he closed the door behind him and turned to see Will looking at him so adoringly, pupils blown and a small smile lighting his face. His beautiful mate…. Hannibal grabbed him by the shirt collar and ripped the entire thing off, far less meticulous than usual in his desire to get that *damn* thing out of the way. It was obstructing his view. And his tongue. So speaking, or rather thinking, Hannibal pulled Will forward and all but attacked his luscious mouth. He tried to find something to say for the moment, something better than the 'I'm going to fuck you through the mattress,' that was threatening to slip out; he settled on "Will."

Will moaned quietly, to his embarrassment, and pressed his lips back to Hannibal's to cover it up. He was having trouble staying in the present moment; he was getting caught up in what he had seen in the arena. *The monster loved him*, whatever that was supposed to mean. He was light headed, but more aroused than he could ever remember being in his life. For once his Omega biology and his rational brain were not at war with each other. Both sides, and every part of him, wanted Hannibal.

Hannibal was more than willing to oblige. He backed Will towards the bed and lightly shoved him back. Will let himself fall and was happily consumed by the creatures warring across Hannibal's face above him. Ironclad restraint, Alpha dominance, and whatever that stag-man was were all fighting to decide how the next half hour or so played out. For a moment, at least, restraint won. It still felt like being consumed, but at least no teeth were involved. An Alpha in Rut could get very bloody very quickly.

Hannibal laved his tongue over Will's belly button just to make the Omega shiver. This kind of submissiveness that Will was showing him, pure and involuntary, was the best that Hannibal could imagine. More important than forcing Will to submit was causing him to want to do it on his own. And Will had completely surrendered control from the moment he had knelt in the arena. Hannibal unbuttoned and unzipped the nice black slacks his Omega wore, then slowly pulled off the man to take off his shoes, socks, and finally the pants.

Will shivered as he was exposed to the cool air and Hannibal's heated stare. The Alpha felt like he had been presented with a buffet and he had no idea where to begin. There was so much to taste and Will was truly a feast for the senses. The nights he had dreamed of Will in his bed, writhing underneath him and calling his name in pleasure, had teased him into this moment. Now could scarcely believe that he was being allowed to touch, and he wanted to touch everything. His more demanding side, his Alpha nature, was making that difficult. *Rut Mate Breed* was screaming through his blood and he knew that a full exploration of Will, one where he could take hours to simply memorize the feel of his skin, would have to wait for a different time. Hannibal's control was hanging by a thread, and he wasn't prepared for it to snap.

Will seemed to have different ideas. He arced his back and pushed his hips into the air, tempting Hannibal to take a taste. The Alpha resisted for a moment, leaning back over Will to capture his lips again, sliding tongue against teeth and another willing tongue. Will was quite content to suck on the organ, putting positively sinful ideas into Hannibal's head. He decided it was better to do first before asking, so he broke the kiss, to Will's dismay and blazed a hot trail downwards. He paused at his Omega's prominent pelvic bone –untilted, a sign that he had never borne children- and nipped the bone lightly, before turning his attention to the prominent erection right at his mouth.

Truthfully, Hannibal had little experience in this area. He knew what he liked but he was not the sort to perform something seen as such a submissive gesture on just anyone. Will, he decided as he licked the head of the man's erection, was not just anyone. He was special; more than special. He was unique and a true wonder. He also had a rather pleasant taste to his skin. Hannibal licked his lips to dampen them and began to slowly swallow Will down as well as he could.

Will was losing his mind. Generally, fellatio was something an Omega did for their Alpha, not the other way around. It was like Hannibal was kneeling for *him*. That aside, he clearly knew what he was doing. He swallowed Will's cock down smoothly, not quite deep throating, but still hitting right above his gag reflex. Will moaned as his Alpha hollowed out his cheeks and pulled back up, the suction amazing as he reached the head and rubbed his tongue along the slit, then the groove, while never removing the pressure. "Hannibal I-I'm gonna cum… You might wa-" Hannibal reached behind Will's body and smoothly pushed two fingers into his waiting hole. That combined with another deep swallow and heavy sucking sent spurts of sterile cum down Hannibal's throat. Not that he minded. Will was beyond caring at that point.

He scissored his two fingers and pushed them deeper, stretching Will for the large girth he would have to accommodate. Alphas were naturally large; Thoroughbreds even more so. It was best to bring him to orgasm and stretch him well first. It was only polite. The way Will writhed back onto his finger with nearly incoherent words of encouragement was only further incentive. He pushed in a third finger and crooked them in a forceful come-hither, making Will see stars as his sensitive prostate was stimulated. In a male Omega, the prostate was its own gland, but studies had shown that it had basically absorbed a clitoris as well, as all infants began as female in utero, which made it more stimulating than either of those pleasure centers individually. It was almost nature's way of making up for how male Omegas had to deliver their children.

Hannibal continued thrusting his fingers in, occasionally stimulating Will's prostate, and sucking on the empty skin between his penis and anus. Male Omegas had internal testes, as they were so small, and the area where they would have been on an Alpha or Beta was full of nerve endings. Pleasing an Omega was actually quite easy. Their bodies were designed for pleasure, both giving and receiving it. Will shot forward into a sitting position and grabbed Hannibal by the shoulder. "I'm ready," He hissed. "Now!"

That was more than enough for Hannibal. He stood up and flipped Will over onto his stomach. The response was immediate and perfect: Will went onto his hands and knees, then lowered his torso to the bed and pushed his firm ass into the air. The Lordosis reflex. The Alpha part of Hannibal's nature rampaged over his reasonable brain and grabbed the Omega's

hips, lining himself up with them and pushing in. He maintained enough of himself to go somewhat slowly, though it didn't appear that Will cared. "Stop teasing, Hannibal! I'll not stand for it!"

"Yes, Will," Hannibal teased, as if he were not the Alpha here. What did that matter? He wanted to please his partner as much as he wanted to be pleased in return. Hannibal snapped his hips forward, causing Will to cry out and thrust his own hips backwards as much as he could. Together they set a brutal pace that would leave them both feeling it in the hips later. Will was biting the pillow his face was planted into, tearing at the sheets, and moaning wantonly. "Yesss. Yesss!" He hissed and Hannibal draped himself over his Omega's back. A very strong part of him was happy with this, but unsatisfied over all. He needed to *bite*, to claim and mate the delectable creature under him. Hannibal bit the back of Will's neck lightly, but didn't break the skin. A small voice was throwing a tantrum in his head –he would **not** force a mating bite on Will.

He kissed where his bite had been and raised back up so that he could pound into the heated, slick flesh around him for the short time he had left. It had been a while, and it had never been with Will, so he could feel his knot starting to swell. It wouldn't be as big as it would be if Will were in Heat, forcing Hannibal into a proper Rut, and he didn't intend on tying them together when he couldn't mate the Omega. It would just be too much of a temptation to bite. Even if that didn't really matter, even though a bond could only be formed in Heat, he could tell that Will didn't want it.

Hannibal didn't appear to be conscious of the fact that he was every bit as vocal as he was enjoying in Will. The Omega reveled in it. The scene from the arena was gone. All of the killers had been driven from his mind; all but one. He remained somewhat aware of what Hannibal was, and he could feel the stag breathing down his neck. If he looked back, he would see the man-monster with ash blackened skin and a proud rack of antlers. The idea should have repulsed him. He should not have turned around to look, to happily watch the stag-man mounting him and rutting into him with abandon. Watching that, and seeing both the man and the beast, Will came upon the silken covers.

The tightening of Will's channel, pulsating and heating up, brought Hannibal to climax as well. He emptied himself into Will in great hot spurts, though his knot immediately began to shrink as it couldn't tie them together. Part of his biology was very disappointed, but his rational brain was coming back to the forefront as he settled from his orgasm, and that part of him approved.

Will groaned happily as Hannibal collapsed on top of him. There was something soothing and intimate about having his Alpha on top of him, still inside of him. The weight should have crushed him, should have been unbearable to his delicate Omega bones, but all he felt was protected and cherished. He chalked it up to the irrational Omega part of him that just wanted to complement Hannibal's Alpha nature –the part of him that was saying he needed to plug Will up to impregnate him, and cover him with his entire body to protect him. It was relaxing, and Will drifted off as Hannibal scented his neck.

Will awoke an indeterminate amount of time later. Hannibal was no longer on top of him, he was no longer covered in sweat and semen, and he had silk pajama bottoms on. Hannibal was sitting up next to him in bed, an arm wrapped round his shoulders as he lay half on his Alpha's lap. It was a very comfortable position. "Hannibal?"

"Yes, Dearest?" Hannibal looked at the Omega with soft, sleepy eyes that Will had never seen before.

A few hours ago, the endearment would have made his heart burst. Now he was returning to himself and remembering all of the reasons why he didn't want to have a mate. He was far too content for panic to force its way into his brain, but he certainly wasn't happy. "We're going to have to talk about this, you know."

"I know, Dearest," Hannibal agreed. He began stroking Will's soft curls rhythmically. "But not tonight, perhaps? I think we should talk about it in the morning, when we are both rested and no longer caught up in the moment. Is that agreeable to you?"

"Yeah, that makes sense," Will agreed. He nuzzled into Hannibal's side and decided he didn't actually feel feathers –it was just his imagination.

"Go to sleep, then, and we will decide everything in the morning. But know I will not force anything on you. I care for you far too much for that." Hannibal shifted downwards so that he was only partially propped up on the pillows and Will was laying on his chest rather than his lap.

"I'm glad to know that." Will hummed contentedly and felt his eyes began to close against his will. "Because you love me. I saw it in the stadium."

"Yes," Hannibal agreed. Will slept with a smile on his face.

The next morning should have been more awkward than it was, but Will chalked that up to all of the bonding hormones still coursing between the pair. He could still think straight, but he wasn't on edge. Really, it was a good time to be having this discussion. Hannibal had ordered room service and they had a banquet laid out before them. Will thought the crepes were quite good; Hannibal had dumped the orange juice down the drain.

"Would you like to go first, Will?" Hannibal offered politely. He was eating the little breakfast sausages with a not entirely pleased look, but at least he hadn't thrown them away.

“I guess so. Feel free to interrupt though. I feel like we’re going to have to constantly stop and negotiate things.”

“Will we?” Hannibal mused.

“Yes,” Will answered simply. He drank half of his coffee, then elaborated. “Because you aren’t just going to let this go. I can see it in your eyes, in the very fact that you’re letting me see anything. You didn’t go into that arena, risking your own life and taking three others, because you think of me as just a friend.

“While I do see you as a friend, and I very much cherish our friendship, indeed more than I do any other, you are right. So what do you propose?”

“That’s the thing,” Will replied. “I don’t know what to propose. I don’t want an Alpha, Hannibal. I am used to being my own person, to having my own freedom and my own life.”

“All of that was very nearly taken from you because you don’t have an Alpha. Isn’t it better to have one of your own choosing than to have one thrust upon you?” The Alpha inquired.

“Ideally, yes, but technically I didn’t choose you.” Even as Will said them, the words sounded too harsh. He could see that Hannibal was trying not to look wounded. “I don’t mean it like that, but it’s true. You won ownership over me in a Fight. I belong to you. I didn’t get to make the choice. I still have to give up everything at your say so.”

“What if it weren’t like that?”

“Do you mean what if it were my choice, or what if my life weren’t over?”

“Both.”

“Explain, please.”

Hannibal took a few bites, marshalling his thoughts. He could smell Will very clearly even over their meal, and it was messing with the rational part of his brain. He wanted to just shove Will down and lay on him until he agreed that they should be mates. “Under the law, I have to keep you for a minimum of one year because I killed other combatants. Neither you nor I can change that. However, do not forget that I was in a Fight before, and yet I have never been mated. I won an Omega, basically ignored her for a year, and set her free afterwards.”

“But that isn’t what you want,” Will pointed out. “You want me.”

“I do want you, very much so. However I refuse to force myself upon you. Allow me to be the one to make a proposition.” Will waved his hand for the Alpha to continue. “In the span of one year, you will have your freedom as much as may be allowed. You will retain your house, your car, your dogs, your money, and your job –assuming it is still available for you. I will take none of those things from you and you can live like before. However I do ask for something in return. For the year in which we must be together, allow me to prove myself to you. Allow me to court you, properly, in the way you so richly deserve. At the end of the year

it will be your choice as to whether or not we mate. If, despite my best efforts, you are not interested, I will set you free. In fact, if you maintain that you truly never want a mate, in addition to freeing your papers, I will offer my guardianship over you so that nothing of this kind can ever happen to you again."

Will froze with a bite halfway to his mouth. "That is a stunningly generous offer. That's it?"

Hannibal sighed. "In all honesty I would prefer you live with me, if only for your safety."

"You would never be able to tolerate seven dogs in your house."

"If we could find homes for the others, could you get by with just one?"

"Hang on!" Will was starting to get twitchy. "I haven't even agreed to live with you yet."

"I am aware of that. I am negotiating the hypothetical terms of you living with me. Or perhaps you would be more comfortable doing so in a few months, when things are more stable?"

"Let me get back to you on that, okay?" Will asked.

Hannibal acquiesced. "And on the rest?"

Will hesitated, and Hannibal allowed him to think. It was an incredible offer. Given that, if he didn't agree, he had no point of negotiation so it would be stupid to not agree. Retain his freedom in exchange for letting Hannibal provide him with food (which he already did), keep other Alphas away from him (which sounded grate), and maybe throw a few odd courting gifts at him (which made him a little uncomfortable, but not as uncomfortable as being chained, naked, to Hannibal's bed 24/7)? It was more than reasonable. At the end of the year, he would be the one to decide if they mated. He could say no and go on with his life, and Hannibal had offered to basically sponsor him in doing so.

"I should make it clear," Hannibal interrupted his thoughts slowly. "When I say I will court you, I do intend to go all out. You deserve nothing less than everything I can muster. I know you tend not to like ostentatious displays like my style of courting will undoubtedly contain, but I cannot do it any other way. I thought I should make sure you knew."

Will nodded. It wasn't unreasonable, though he wasn't exactly excited about that. No, that wasn't quite true either. Part of him, the part that had ruled his brain last night, was very excited. Excited, flattered, and awed. It screamed at him to accept and accept now. But there was one more issue.

Will knew that Hannibal was a killer. He didn't know the extent, but he knew the Alpha had killed willingly in the past and would do so again in the future. If he allowed this to happen, he would basically be foreswearing turning in a murderer. *Don't worry*, the sickly sweet, Omegan part of his brain murmured. *Like you saw before, he is no danger to you. The monster won't hurt you. The monster loves you.* Will remembered telling Hannibal last night that he knew the man loved him, but he couldn't recall the response. "Do you love me?" He asked neutrally.

“Yes,” Hannibal confirmed. “Very much so, and for quite a while. That is why I fought for you. That is why I am unwilling to just let you slip through my fingers.”

Will nodded, and added that willing admission to his mental file on Hannibal. He had all he needed to know, for now. “I accept.”

Chapter End Notes

So how about that waltz? I mean damn! When I get married, that's going to be the first dance. It gave me shivers and brought a tear to my eye. Easily the most beautiful piece of music I have ever heard.

This is the last chapter in The Dominance Fights. Rather than doing one incredibly long work, I have a preference for doing this as several short story arcs. That helps continuity and to switch the primary focus. The next arc won't be about the Fights; it will be about Hannibal courting Will. Everything will be kept together in one series as it's all related, and there will likely be several one-shots thrown in.

Third, I apologize but from here on out updates will be coming more slowly. It didn't even take me a week to finish this entire arc plus a one shot. I realize that this probably gave you unrealistic expectations. I do write very quickly, when I have time to write, however I will be moving at the end of July, I have to take my GRE on August 18th, the new semester starts on August 21st, I work and I'm trying to get another job, and I have to work on my writing sample as well as scrounge around for letters of recommendation, all while trying to win any scholarship I can. While it should never take more than a week between chapters unless something big is going on (like the GRE, midterms, or finals), don't be surprised when it takes me more than a day to post three chapters.

Sorry about the long note. I will see all of you in the next arc. Who likes Sugar Daddy Hannibal and Reluctant Sugar Baby Will? I do! (See, kinky.) Poor Hannibal. Will gave him a taste but isn't sure he wants to let him have the full treat. Hannibal is going to have to work his fine little ass off if he wants Will as his mate!

Also I found another Dominance Fights style A/B/O death-match thing story! I'm so excited (kind of feels like a validation of the idea, though that story came before mine). If you like mine, check out Of Moons, Birds, & Monsters by shiboo. Three chapters in and I am HOOKED! I haven't felt like this since Bread and Music ended (last week). http://archiveofourown.org/works/1533917/chapters/3246422

XOXO

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!